



Lost Creek State Park Indian Education For All Lesson Plan

Title

Lost Creek- Sacred Landscapes

Content Area(s)

Social Studies; Media Literacy; Geography

Grade level

8th+ (adaptable for grades 9-12)

Duration

3 class periods

Goals (Montana Standards/Essential Understandings)

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 1

There is great diversity among the 12 tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral history beginning with their origins that are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 6

History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

Social Studies Content Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

Speaking and Listening Content Standard 4: Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.

Reading Content Standard 5: Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.

Overview

Lost Creek State Park, with its rare geological formations and its location along heavily used Native trails, provide a perfect setting for study of “Sacred Landscapes.”

Around the world there are thousands of places regarded as sacred. Some are still carefully guarded by indigenous people and are sites of secret ceremony and prayer. Some are national shrines known to millions. These holy sites emanate a magnetic force that draws people from far away, though the journey is frequently made only in the imagination. Often sacred sites are embroiled in conflicts over preservation, resource development or tourism. Their histories are long and complex; they embody the tenacity of ancient cultures and preserve vast areas of biodiversity.

-from the “sacred lands” website http://www.sacredland.org/sacred_land.html

- This lesson seeks to:
 - Introduce students to the relationship between the land, (sacred landscapes) and how native people (cultures) identify themselves;
 - Describe how the value native people put on the land affect their cultural identity;
 - Convey to students that the study of geography is more than memorization of states and cities, but has implications related to cultural history and identity;
 - Introduce or enhance student’s cultural research skills; and
 - Help students appreciate and value the cultures and traditions of native people

Suggested Teaching Approaches

- Involve students in the planning of learning experiences about the Indian tribes of Western Montana. These planned experiences may include: the gathering of information about the native people of western Montana, a visit to Lost Creek State Park to see the unique landscape, the geography and geology, a visit to museums with a Native American focus, like the People’s Center in Pablo, Montana. Make plans for accessing, organizing, and presenting information.
- Use of literature material, biographies of the local people, and oral histories is encouraged.
- Information may be organized and shared in a variety of ways, including: maps, graphs, charts, posters, pictures, dioramas, models, displays, interviews, and stories.

Teachers Preparation

- For an overview of the science of geography, review the “What is Geography” page at: http://www.aag.org/Careers/What_is_geog.html.
- To help introduce the idea of sacred landscapes (geography) to students, review the resources at <http://www.sacredland.org>.
- Download a PDF copy of Peter Nabokov’s “Sacred Places of Native America”, pages 27-33, and Dorothea Theodoratus and Frank LaPena’s article “Wintu Sacred Geography”, pages 61- 68, in the Sacred Land Reader, <http://www.sacredland.org/PDFs/SLReader.pdf>.
- To introduce students to combining the study of geography and traditional native knowledge, aka “Sacred Landscapes,” download and copy the following articles for the students to read.
 - “Indigenous Geography as discipline arrives.” *Indian Country Today*, March 26, 2004 . <http://indiancountry.com/content.cfm?id=1096409838&update=yes&CFID=7404&CFTOKEN=53149436>.
 - For a Montana perspective see <http://www.crosscurrents.org/mountainsalive.htm>

Suggested Activities and Procedures

- After providing a brief overview of the science of geography for students, http://www.aag.org/Careers/What_is_geog.html assign the students the project of exploring local cultural history by researching a specific location within Montana. Ask the

students to form groups (no more than four) and work in-class with the students while they select a location to research. <http://www.crosscurrents.org/mountainsalive.htm>

- While the students are working on their project outside of class, continue to integrate the geographic theme by introducing them to the idea of sacred geography by assigning the students readings from Earth Island Institute's Sacred Land Reader <http://www.sacredland.org/PDFs/SLReader.pdf>. Have the class discuss what sacred geography means and how an understanding of sacred landscapes in Indian communities becomes a source of pride and conflict.
- Devote a class period to conduct a seminar based on the three readings <http://www.sacredland.org/PDFs/SLReader.pdf> about the connection between traditional native knowledge and the study of geography. *Students must come prepared to discuss these readings in order for the seminar to be successful.* Students must come to class prepared with questions or comments related to the selected readings to discuss with their fellow classmates. The teacher should be prepared to guide and mediate the discussion, if necessary, but the discussion should be done by the students themselves.

EVALUATION

Discussion/observation

Participation

Classroom seminar

Extensions

Invite a tribal member from the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes to your classroom to learn about sacred landscapes.

Check out these great books to learn more about the tribes of the Flathead reservation.

Coyote stories of the Montana Salish Indians by Johnny Arlee
Salish Kootenai College Press , 1999.

Stories From our Elders

Salish Culture Committee Publications

In the Name of the Salish & Kootenai Nation

Bigart,, Robert, Clarence Woodcock ed. Salish Kootenai College Press 1996

Indian Trails of the Northern Rockies

Flanagan, Darris - Stoneydale Press

Websites

www.anamp.org/nescp_curriculum/pdf/FlatheadOverview.pdf

Good historical overview of the Flathead Reservation

<http://www.sacredland.org/PDFs/SLReader.pdf>

"Managing Hopi Sacred Sites to Protect Religious Freedom", pages 53 - 59,
Sacred Land Reader.

Resources for further study:

- Vine Deloria, Jr. and Daniel Wildcat, *Power and Place, Indian Education in America*, Fulcrum Resources, 2001.
- Resource for Teaching about the Americas, University of New Mexico's Latin America and Iberian Institute, <http://retanet.unm.edu/>.
- American Association of Geographers, <http://www.aag.org/>.
- Smithsonian Institute Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, <http://www.folklife.si.edu/index.html>.
- Sacred Lands Project, Earth Island Institute, <http://www.sacredland.org/>
- *Indian Country Today*, <http://www.indiancountry.com/>.
- Aboriginal Mapping Network, <http://www.nativemaps.org/>